

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 25 have been examined. Claims 6-10 are cancelled by this Amendment. Claims 11-24 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-5 and 25 are all the claims now being considered by the Examiner in this application.

I. Formal Matters

On December 26, 2000, Applicant filed an Information Disclosure Statement ("IDS"). Applicant requests that the Examiner provide a signed copy of the IDS with the next Office Action.

II. Objections to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claim 1 because of a period located within the claim. This period has been removed in the accompanying claim amendments. Applicant notes that this period was introduced into claim 1 in the Preliminary Amendment by an inadvertent error. Removal of the period by this Amendment restores claim 1 to its as-filed form.

III. Cancelled Claims

Applicant hereby cancels claims 6-10.

IV. Amended Claims

The Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly define the present invention.

In addition to the amendment made to claim 1, other claims (*see, e.g.*, claims 15 and 17) have been amended to correct a scanning error. Due to an inadvertent error, certain language was omitted from the claims as presented in the Preliminary Amendment. These amendments restore the claims to their as-filed form.

V. 35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejections

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. However, as Applicant has cancelled claims 6-10, the rejection is moot.

VI. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Rejections

Claims 1 and 5-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,850,327 to Mizuta ("Mizuta").

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 recites a method wherein the liner is welded to the inner surface of the shell half over the entire area of the liner along the welding pattern. In Mizuta, a welding pattern 40a of a welding horn 40 is disposed only at the periphery of the welding horn 40, not at the central portion of the welding horn 40. *See* Fig. 8. Thus, Mizuta fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned element of claim 1.

As a further distinction, claim 1 recites a method wherein the welding horn face of the welding horn has substantially the same shape and dimensions as those of the liner and wherein the welding pattern is formed on the welding face of the welding horn over the entire welding area in which the welding horn is brought into contact with the liner and the liner is welded to the inner surface of the shell half over the entire area of the liner along the welding pattern. Mizuta does not disclose a welding horn face having the same shape and dimension as those of the liner; the welding horn face disclosed in Mizuta (*see* Fig. 8) is not a circular-shaped element shown as liners 5, 6 in Fig. 1 or an octagonal-shaped element shown as liner 5 in Fig. 8. Furthermore, as Mizuta discloses only welding the liner 5, 6 to the shells 1,2 along the periphery

of the liner 5, 6 (*see* Fig. 8), Mizuta fails to disclose welding a liner to a shell half over the entire area of the liner along the welding pattern. Thus, for this additional reason, Mizuta fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned elements of claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejection should be withdrawn.

B. Claim 5

Claim 5 depends on claim 1. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 is patentable based on this dependency.

C. Claims 6-10

Claims 6-10 have been canceled. Thus, the Examiner's rejection of claims 6-10 is rendered moot.

VII. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

A. Claims 2-4

Claims 2-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizuta in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,705,004 to Watanabe *et al.*

As claims 2-4 each depend on claim 1, and as Watanabe fails to cure the above-noted deficiencies of the Mizuta reference discussed with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-4 are patentable over the combination of Mizuta and Watanabe based at least on this dependency.

B. Claim 25

Claim 25 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizuta in view of Nakajima.

As claim 25 depends on claim 1, and as Watanabe fails to cure the above-noted deficiencies of the Mizuta reference discussed with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 25 is patentable over the combination of Mizuta and Watanabe based at least on this dependency.

However, as a further distinction, claim 25 recites a method comprising the step of

positioning each of the shell halves bearing thereon the liner fixed thereto with the surface of the liner opposed to a front end face of an ultrasonic welding horn *at a predetermined space* therefrom, vibrating the liner by ultrasonic wave radiated from the front end face of the ultrasonic welding horn, *and blowing an air flow against the surface of the liner.*

(emphasis added). Thus, in the method recited in claim 25, there is a predetermined space between the welding horn and the surface of the liner when air is blown against the surface of the liner. In Nakajima, air is blown against the surface of the liner *during* the welding process. *See* col. 4, lines 39-41; Fig. 3 (timing b). Accordingly, the combination of Mizuta and Watanabe fails to teach or suggest each element of claim 25. Thus, for this additional reason, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 25 is patentable over the combination of Mizuta and Watanabe.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejection should be withdrawn.

VIII. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.


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